

Stepping Stones

14. Unity In The Body Of Christ

When Jesus came to the end of His earthly ministry, He was concerned for the unity of His disciples. They still had many of the prejudices that were common to people in general. So, He prayed *“that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”* (John 17:21) This unity is a powerful witness to the world of the converting power of Christ.

1. Into what relationship does the Holy Spirit lead us?

1 Cor 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Eph 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

2. What truth about God highlights the importance of church unity?

1 Cor 12:4-6 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Rom 15:5-6 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. What does the Bible say about personality differences within His church?

1 Cor 12:12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

1 Cor 12:6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Fact: We think differently and we can make different contributions to church life to build it up. Taking the gospel to the world depends on our harmoniously using our various gifts. (Read 1 Corinthians 12).

4. What testimony is to be borne by the Christian church to the world?

John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Psalms 133:1 How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!

Fact: Unity strengthens while disunity weakens. The body of Christ prospers when the members are in harmony. *“Unity and love will accomplish wonderful things for the believers. Will not our churches arouse and give the last warning message to the world?”*

Conclusion

The Bible tells us that there is one God and He has one church. That church is to be the communicator to the world of God’s love and forbearance, and His providing of salvation and eternal life. The body of Christ is not only to *tell* about, but to *example* God’s love by being united as a people in His love.

Seventh-day Adventists Believe:

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.

Fundamental Belief No. 14

Review Exercises

- 1 Corinthians 12:13** For we were all _____ by ___ Spirit so as to form ___ body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all _____ the one _____ to drink.
- Ephesians 4:4-6** There is one _____ and one _____, just as you were _____ to one _____ when you were called; one _____, one _____, one _____; one God and Father of all, who is _____ all and _____ all and _____ all.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6** There are _____ kinds of _____, but the same Spirit _____ them. There are different kinds of _____, but the same _____. There are different kinds of _____, but in all of them and in _____ it is the same _____ at work.
- Romans 15:5-6** May the God who gives _____ and _____ give you the same attitude of _____ toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with _____ mind and _____ voice you may _____ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12** Just as a _____, though one, has many _____, but all its many parts form _____ body, so it is with _____.
- 1 Corinthians 12:6** There are different kinds of _____, but in _____ of them and in _____ it is the _____ God at work.
- John 13:34-35** “A new _____ I give you: _____ one another. As I have _____ you, so you must _____ one another. By this _____ will know that you are my _____, if you _____ one another.”
- Psalms 133:1** How _____ and _____ it is when _____ people live together in _____!